


# Braille Monitor



JULY, 1975

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2010 with funding from  
National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

<http://www.archive.org/details/braillemonitorjuly75nati>

# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

*A Publication of the*  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*

*National Offices*  
218 RANDOLPH HOTEL BLDG.  
FOURTH & COURT STREETS  
DES MOINES, IOWA 50309

*Washington Office*  
DUPONT CIRCLE BLDG., SUITE 212  
1346 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION  
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.



## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN INKPRINT, BRAILLE, AND ON TALKING BOOK DISCS  
BY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

### *Editor*

**PERRY SUNDQUIST**  
4651 MEAD AVENUE  
SACRAMENTO, CALIF. 95822

### *Associate Editor*

**HAZEL tenBROEK**  
2652 SHASTA ROAD  
BERKELEY, CALIF. 94708

NEWS ITEMS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE EDITOR

ADDRESS CHANGES SHOULD BE SENT TO  
2652 SHASTA ROAD, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94708

DONATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO  
THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND AND SENT TO  
RICHARD EDLUND, TREASURER, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,  
BOX 11185, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66111.

\* \* \*

If you or a friend wishes to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

“I give, devise, and bequeath unto NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$\_\_\_ (or, “\_\_\_percent of my net estate”, or “the following stocks and bonds: \_\_\_”) to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons.”

If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

CONTENTS

SOUTH DAKOTA MAKES FIFTY STATES . . . . .	257
BY JOYCE SCANLAN	
PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND LAYS THE LASH TO NAC . . . . .	258
NFB AND THE FCC: ROUND II . . . . .	265
BY JAMES GASHEL	
LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND: TALKING BOOK POLICY AND GENERAL PURPOSE . . . . .	267
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN	
INSURANCE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE BLIND . . . . .	271
BY TED YOUNG	
AURORA RECORDS 17TH LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS . . . . .	277
NFB OF FLORIDA: ON THE BARRICADES AGAIN . . . . .	278
BY JAMES GASHEL	
BLIND GIRL'S MOTHER WANTS TO LEAVE TOWN . . . . .	281
BY JIM IRVINE	
ARIZONA CONVENTION . . . . .	283
BY JAMES CARLOCK	
FLORIDA CONVENTION . . . . .	284
BY HAROLD SNIDER	
RECIPE OF THE MONTH . . . . .	287
BY BARBARA FRAZIER	
MONITOR MINIATURES . . . . .	288

## SOUTH DAKOTA MAKES FIFTY STATES

BY

JOYCE SCANLAN

The National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota was organized on Saturday, May 3, at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in Sioux Falls. This marked a red-letter day in the annals of NFB history because, for the first time, we had Federation affiliates in all fifty states plus the District of Columbia.

Iowa and Minnesota joined forces to organize South Dakota. On the team were Bob Ray, Roger Erpelding, Mike Smith, and Sharon Monthei of Iowa; and Eric Smith, Marj Schneider, Carl and Ruby Kuhl, Tom Scanlan, and I from Minnesota. Because of the vast distance to be traveled in South Dakota, the team was divided, and all of us moved from town to town during the week.

Blind persons in South Dakota showed symptoms which have come to be associated with an area in which there is no effective organization of the blind. We were told of "conventions" and "banquets," but there was no apparent effort to deal with human issues such as rehabilitation, training, employment, and the improvement of conditions for blind people. Many of those we visited greeted us in an atmosphere of some despair and hopelessness. As we told our story, the reaction was understandably skeptical. "Is this really true?" Finally, inspired by the idea of a brighter future, they said, "How can we join this organization?"

Only a few individuals displayed a degree of hostility toward the members of the organizing team and the NFB. However, a

group of ACB-ers appeared at the organizing meeting in an attempt to disrupt and persuade individuals to join the local ACB outfit. The director of the State agency for the blind did not seem altogether happy to see the Federation in South Dakota. The ACB president and vice president slipped through the registration line and paid dues, but it was obvious to everyone throughout the meeting that neither could support the principles of the NFB. The ACB State President admitted that he could not subscribe to the pledge on the back of the membership card. He actually tried to urge those present to join the South Dakota Association rather than the NFB. He said that there was an existing State organization and South Dakota didn't want to be a part of an organization functioning at the national level. In spite of his open opposition to the Federation, the president would not accept the return of his dollar. Because we cannot have members who will not support the NFB and its activities, we have accepted the president's dollar as a donation from the ACB. The vice-president's dollar was returned to her. These two never were members of the Federation.

No one seemed at all impressed with the performance of the ACB at the organizing meeting. Not one person left or even seemed to be affected by any comments that were made against the NFB.

The NFB of South Dakota is off to a running start with a group of eager leaders and officers. The president is Barbara Ollila who has a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and works as an alternative

care worker in the Division of Social Welfare. First Vice-President Hildegard Langrehr is a professional singer who in her spare time works with senior citizens. Dan Marshall, Second Vice-President, is a senior in history and German at the University of South Dakota at Vermillion. Secretary, Linda Baldwin plans to enter college and study elementary education as soon as possible. Dan Lauritsen, Treasurer, is a post-graduate student in social work at Augustana College in Sioux Falls. Board member for a two-year term is Kathleen McRae, an employee of the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind Workshop in Sioux

Falls. Kitty Mullally will serve as board member for one year; she was formerly in show business and taught dancing. She now is active with senior citizens and the League of Women Voters.

South Dakotans asked, "Why did we have to be dead last in being organized into the Federation?" Well, the only answer is that it's inevitable that someone will be last, but with the enthusiasm and strength of the South Dakota membership, the fiftieth state may soon come to exemplify the scriptural teaching: "The last shall be first." □

#### PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE AGENCIES FOR THE BLIND LAYS THE LASH TO NAC

Time was when the claim was made that the only people in the world who found NAC less than perfect were the members of the National Federation of the Blind—not the agencies or the Federal establishment or the public or the blind, just the Federation. Then, the house of cards began to tumble: then, in growing numbers, the blind of the Nation began to picket and demonstrate at NAC's meetings and to contact their congressmen and senators, as well as anybody else who would listen. Also, there were, of course, from the very beginning agencies which refused to buy the NAC hoax—the Jewish Braille Institute of America, for instance.

Last year the Mississippi State Services for the Blind informed NAC that it wished its name withdrawn from the list of NAC-accredited agencies. Over a month later (in testimony before a Congressional committee) NAC spokesmen conveniently forgot to mention the withdrawal and counted the Mississippi agency in the number of

those accredited.

Early in 1975 the pace increased. NAC lost its Federal funds. Of course, NAC had an explanation—NAC always has an explanation. Nevertheless, the money was gone. Not only was NAC experiencing trouble within the Federal establishment but also with private foundations which had formerly been supportive. A case in point was the William Bingham Foundation. On March 31, 1975, Laurel B. Kovacic (Trustee of the Foundation) wrote:

DEAR MR. BLEECKER: Sometime after the William Bingham Foundation awarded a grant to NAC last year, we received a letter and a packet of materials from the National Federation of the Blind. You are familiar with the material, I am sure. It levels some serious charges against NAC: charges of, at the least, non-cooperation, elitism, and irrelevance.

As the trustee who recommended NAC



to the Board of Trustees of the William Bingham Foundation, and since NAC now returns to us for a continuation of that grant, I feel that it is essential to ask you to respond to a number of questions.

(1) May I have copies of the standards you have set for the blind organizations who seek accreditation? I have asked once before.

(2) In your proposal, you speak of a "critical mass" of 100 accredited members. How do you define the "NAC universe" of 400?

(3) Has United Way set a policy that agencies to which it allocates funds be accredited by NAC or some other accreditation agency?

(4) In 1971 NAC had accredited 33 members: the goal for that year was 58. In 1974, 55 members had been accredited, and the goal is 100 by 1980. The rate of accreditation has slowed considerably, it appears.

(5) Are blind workers in accredited shops now paid the Federal Minimum Wage? If not, why not?

(6) Has anything been done to include the voice of the blind consumer in the policy decisions and standard-setting of NAC?

(7) When will HEW and AFB support end?

These questions reflect my concern with the charges that NFB has leveled at NAC; although I do not necessarily agree with all of its demands, I do share its stated goals and its concern over the attitude of

paternalism it says NAC fosters. I am not interested in counter-charges against NFB. Whatever axe it may have to grind, professionally, politically, or personally, it has raised some valid questions which need answering.

I look forward to your early reply. The Board of Trustees of the William Bingham Foundation meets in early May to consider grant applications. We will need your response in time to give it proper evaluation.

Thank you for giving this matter your careful attention.

Sincerely,

LAUREL B. KOVACIK

*Trustee*

*William Bingham Foundation*

NAC's application was not considered. NAC received no further funds.

It was a bad spring for NAC. Following Mississippi's lead, the Board of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland unanimously voted to sever relations with NAC. On the board were Mr. Francis Andrews, well known retired superintendent of the Maryland School for the Blind, and Dr. Richard Hoover, widely known for his pioneering work with the Hoover Cane Technique and recently a NAC Board member himself.

But worse was yet to come. May 6 brought another catastrophe—the final bitter blow, perhaps. In a letter dated April 21, 1975, Dr. Geraldine Scholl had written to Burt Risley, president of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, to ask his assistance in revising NAC

standards on orientation and mobility. As will be seen, the document she enclosed was NAC's usual blend of arrogance, condescension, irrelevance, and insensitivity. Mobility instructors must have 20/20 eyesight, "normal hearing in both ears," and "no physical impairment or organic mental deterioration that would limit the instructor's capability to perform effectively or prevent him from protecting his client from imminent danger." The mobility instructor must have a "personality makeup capable of meeting the demands and emotional stress of the job," and he must have "patience, unpossessiveness, prudence, tolerance, and integrity."

But Dr. Scholl got more than she bargained for. Mr. Risley did, indeed, respond—at length and in very specific detail. He was fed up, and he said so. He hoped that his "candor and bluntness" would be excused, but earlier efforts of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind "to communicate a related point of view to NAC in more general terms" did not "appear to have achieved desired levels of effectiveness."

After all of this, will NAC and its apologists still try to bluff and pretend? Will they conveniently forget Maryland, as they earlier did Mississippi? Will they neglect to mention the Bingham Foundation? Above all, will they try to explain away the letter from Burt Risley—saying it didn't happen, or he didn't mean it, or he had a headache, or the weather was bad, or the reader misinterpreted, or some other NAC-ism? Will they still try to say that only the National Federation of the Blind finds fault?

As we have said before, the NAC drama is coming to an end. The curtain is falling,

faster and faster. It only remains to be seen whether NAC can muster the aplomb to do the graceful thing, or whether it will die as it has lived—awkwardly, stridently, destructively, miserably.

-----  
New York, New York, April 21, 1975

DEAR MR. RISLEY: We are writing to you because of our common interest in sound standards for orientation and mobility services.

The NAC Commission on standards is currently reviewing each of the sets of standards developed in *The COMSTAC Report* at the rate of two sets annually. The purpose of this comprehensive review is to insure that the standards remain up to date and useful guides to improved services. The review is based on a plan developed by the commission which includes broad based participation from accredited and non-accredited agencies, consumers, interest groups, leaders in the field and other concerned individuals.

This year, in addition to reviewing two sets: standards for accounting for services and finances, and for workshop services, the commission has chosen also to review several specific standards for orientation and mobility services.

NAC has received a number of comments concerning these specific items. Developments in the area of preparation for mobility instructors since the codification of these standards have been noted. The emergence of a well established certification program for instructors, as recommended by COMSTAC, has been cited. Finally, the question has been raised whether NAC

standards for physical characteristics of mobility instructors unfairly exclude blind or other visually handicapped persons.

The Commission on Standards has responded to these comments from the field by selecting pertinent standards for review. These standards are identified on the enclosed sheet.

We ask that the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind critically review these standards to insure that they reflect the needs of all populations served and express the best of current practice, pertinent literature and related developments in the field. We are hoping to receive your comments by June 1, 1975 in order to complete this review promptly.

Thank you for your assistance in insuring timely and relevant standards for orientation and mobility.

Sincerely yours,

GERALDINE T. SCHOLL, Ph.D.  
*Chairman*  
*Commission on Standards*

---

## THE COMSTAC REPORT, S-3, ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY SERVICES.

### 1.4 Physical Qualifications of Orientation and Mobility Teachers.

Orientation and mobility teachers meet the following physical standards:

- 1.4.1 Vision: no impairment not correctible in each eye to 20/20, no restriction in the visual peripheral field under all com-

mon circumstances, no evidence of pathology contributing to progressive deterioration.

- 1.4.2 Hearing: normal in both ears.

- 1.4.3 General physical condition: no physical impairments or organic mental deterioration that would limit the instructor's capacity to perform effectively or prevent him from protecting his client from imminent danger.

- 1.4.4 Ophthalmological, otological and general physical examinations are required every two years.

### 1.5 Personal Qualifications of Orientation and Mobility Teachers.

Orientation and mobility teachers meet the following personal standards:

- 1.5.1 Personality makeup capable of meeting the demands and emotional stress of the job in a creative, realistic, and optimistic way.
- 1.5.2 Ability to effect relationships of a courteous professional nature.
- 1.5.3 Keen observation and the ability to interpret observations.
- 1.5.4 Ability to organize work.
- 1.5.5 Ability to accept supervision in a constructive manner.
- 1.5.6 Flexibility, patience, unpossess-

iveness, prudence, tolerance, and integrity.

## 2.11 Professional Qualifications of Teachers.

In addition to the stated physical and personal qualifications (1.4 and 1.5), teachers of orientation and mobility are professionally qualified through meeting either of the following two criteria:

2.11.1 Graduation from an accredited graduate level program for training teachers of orientation and mobility.

2.11.2 Alternatively, approval by an appropriate body to be established for certification of teachers qualified by experience who meet all but the academic standards.

---

*Austin, Texas, May 6, 1975*

DEAR DOCTOR SCHOLL: Thank you for your letter of April 21, 1975, regarding the proposed standards for orientation and mobility services.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide state agency input in relation to the standards revision process in which NAC is now engaged, and we also appreciate your interest in attempting to take timely action to make certain standards somewhat more meaningful, relevant, and congruent with the changes which have come to characterize this field in recent years. Unfortunately, though, as you probably know, most state agencies for the blind presently are heavily involved in state legislative matters and, of

course, all programs for the blind are confronted with the necessity of trying to implement effectively major new Federal legislation. Perhaps after these matters have been attended to, we will see a somewhat more enthusiastic and conscientious review effort being exerted on the various revisions of NAC's standards than we have witnessed to this date.

Pending those developments, I am forwarding copies of this correspondence to the NCSAB Executive Board, by way of inviting individual responses to your proposed standards for orientation and mobility services. I shall at this time comment on those standards, but I do want to make it clear that the comments I offer are made solely in an individual capacity and that I do not purport to represent any viewpoint other than that of myself and staff of the Texas State Commission for the Blind in the reaction I now offer.

First of all, quite frankly, if NAC wishes to promulgate detailed and specific standards of the type you have forwarded to me, then I certainly extend you best wishes, but I must also advise that this type of approach hardly commends itself to the generation of any significant amount of broad-based support for NAC among public and private organizations serving the blind here in Texas. To be very specific, the Texas Commission for the Blind will not subscribe to an accreditation process which utilizes the kind of approach suggested in the proposed orientation and mobility standards, and neither will the Texas Commission for the Blind ask any contracting organization to submit to an accreditation process involving standards of this type.

Second, I seriously doubt that proposed standards of the type set out in the

revision of S-3 of the COMSTAC Report are likely to receive the support of even a majority of the state programs for the blind in the United States.

Third, it is suggested that your organization has perhaps missed the main point of the extended policy statement unanimously adopted by the NCSAB membership, i.e., that in the formulation of standards there must be less preoccupation with narrow and rigid fine points bearing upon formal credentials and considerably more emphasis upon broad and essential components of service delivery which have a more real, immediate and practical impact upon the lives of blind Americans.

In my personal judgment, most state agencies for the blind, a majority of the private organizations for the blind, and virtually every residential school for the blind has long since passed the point where there is any necessity or even any utility in having the kind of checklist NAC now proposes to develop for orientation and mobility services. I think that I can make this statement categorically and without qualification, the Texas Commission for the Blind's having been instrumental in the development of a new degree program for orientation and mobility instructors—and with every graduate of that program easily meeting and in most instances exceeding narrow and rigid criteria of the type proposed in the revised COMSTAC document on orientation and mobility services.

On the other hand, it also is my personal judgment that work for the blind, if it no longer in the main needs the kind of technical manual which some apparently envision an accreditation process to be, does at least need some sort of map and

certain "landmarks" to refer to for the purpose of serving eligible blind individuals in a timely and maximally effective manner. Relating this to the proposed standards immediately at hand, I must suggest that standards of the type NAC now proposes to promulgate in relation to orientation and mobility services contribute absolutely nothing new or useful to this field of work; instead, it would seem to me that such standards are totally duplicative and redundant of a certification service which is already adequately being handled by the American Association of Workers for the Blind.

It is seriously doubted that agencies for the blind desiring accreditation, and having the programmatic substance and integrity to be seriously considered for any meaningful accreditation, need at this late date to be making reference to materials which set out in cumbersome detail the amount of hearing, sight, or formalistic credentials an orientation and mobility instructor should have. What is more greatly needed is something which totally shifts the emphasis away from items such as credentials calculated to advance the self-aggrandizement of professionals in the field and which shifts the emphasis to where it ought to be—toward substantive service concerns about the best interests of the blind individuals for whom the field exists in the first instance.

All of which, I believe, brings us down to the fundamental conflict between NAC's approach on these proposed standards and the approach previously recommended to your organization by the NCSAB in the strongest and firmest of terms: If there was ever a necessity for competent and responsible administrators of either public or private service organizations for the blind to be told to be attentive to such matters as an orientation and mobility instructor's personality makeup, ability to organize work, or visual acuity, that neces-



sity no longer exists—and to be quite blunt about it, a document which inferentially suggests that such a necessity may exist is, if not to be regarded as demeaning and unnecessarily patronizing by some, quite likely to be regarded as irrelevant and superfluous by many. What is needed at this time, and what S-3 totally fails to provide, is a set of more general but fundamentally more significant guidelines: the minimum amount of orientation and mobility service to be provided to blind clients on an individual basis; the minimum and the desired outcomes of orientation and mobility services in terms of various settings in which the blind individual may find himself at future dates; requirements for follow-up within the blind individual's community once he has left the facility at which orientation and mobility services are provided; general standards which preserve the integrity of this service provided by O&M aides working under the supervision of an individual with experience and graduate credentials; a system for evaluating the effectiveness of these services; a requirement that service organizations have internal mechanisms for timely and adequately correcting identifiable deficiencies in these services; et cetera.

State agencies need the latter types of standards for many purposes, including the purpose of complying with new Federal evaluation requirements and the purpose of obtaining appropriations and other resources required for the extension of services. Private organizations require standards of these types in order to assure that programs have desired standards of relevance and effectiveness, as well as to fight the funding battles before organizations carrying out unified community fund raising activities. By itself, the graduate

degree of a professional in this field has yet to provide any benefit for a blind individual; it would be immensely more meaningful to blind individuals if standards specified that services would be adequate to assure that certain minimum personal client goals may generally be accomplished through any service organization desiring to hold out as suitable for accreditation.

As stated at the outset, I offer these comments as an individual only and I do not purport that this reaction is endorsed by the entirety of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. However, I believe that careful reference to the policy statement we have previously forwarded to NAC will reflect that many of these comments are simply restatements of the position we have previously taken on the matter of accreditation. For my part, I am disappointed that any restatement is necessary and if there are members of the NCSAB Executive Board who do not concur in this sentiment, I am sure that you will be hearing from them at an early date.

I trust that you will excuse my candor and bluntness, but the NCSAB's effort to communicate a related point of view to NAC in more gentle terms does not appear to have achieved desired levels of effectiveness; at least, such is the impression with which I am left after looking at the proposed language for S-3.

Sincerely,

BURT L. RISLEY  
*President*

□

## NFB AND THE FCC: ROUND II

BY

JAMES GASHEL

Having successfully won the *Keener* case which secured the rights of blind persons to be licensed as first-class radio telephone operators, most of us thought that the battle was over, at least insofar as the Federal Communications Commission was concerned. Not so. Now, in this sphere, a new challenge is on the horizon, and Federalists must be prepared to meet it.

To set the stage, I need to describe a sequence of events. Marine Telephone Company of Miami, Florida, is a firm which operates a coastal communications system under the rules and regulations established by the Federal Communications Commission. In total compliance with the new emphasis on hiring the handicapped, pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Marine Telephone decided to be one of the leaders in affirmative action. Incidentally, they were also thoroughly convinced, from a practical business standpoint, that hiring several blind employees would be in their long-range best interests. The Bureau of Blind Services (the rehabilitation agency in Florida) was contacted, and the bureau referred several clients for placement in Marine Telephone's operation.

So far, so good—Congress passes law calling for affirmative action for hiring the handicapped, private contractor develops plans to comply with law, State services for the blind refers clients for placement on the job—but here the scheme breaks down. Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission prescribe certain routines and procedures which are to be followed when operating coastal communi-

cations installations. Wishing to comply with these regulations, Marine Telephone officials conferred with appropriate staff in the Aviation and Marine Division of the Safety and Special Radio Services Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission. During their negotiations with FCC, Marine described the alternative techniques it had developed to enable blind employees to function independently and competently on the job. That was in September 1974. According to Marine Telephone, the FCC response (only verbal, nothing written, of course) was a flat "no." The company was not to be permitted to employ the blind under any circumstances. Safety was involved. Distress calls were to be answered. How would a blind radio operator react in an emergency situation?

Discouraged, but not beaten, Marine Telephone decided to enlist the assistance of both State and Federal agencies—the Florida Bureau of Blind Services, and the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. Late in February, 1975, matters stood at an impasse. By this time, the new Office of Employment Standards for Handicapped Workers in the Department of Labor had learned of the Marine Telephone case. Through a series of developing contacts with that office, I learned of the situation, and the National Federation of the Blind began to mobilize for action. Perhaps we are less tolerant of discrimination against the blind than some of the agencies.

In any event, largely at the urging of the NFB, Marine Telephone filed a formal re-

quest for a waiver of certain of the applicable regulations. Prior to the filing, we made it clear that we were not prepared to stand by while bureaucratic delay and buck-passing were preventing blind individuals from earning their own way through productive work. On April 11, 1975, the FCC approved the request, but only on a temporary basis and subject to review of extensive records which the company is required to maintain. In other words, the FCC has ruled: "Yes, you can employ the blind, but . . ."

DEAR MR. BITTAR: This is in reference to your request for waiver of Sections 81.116(a) and 81.314(a) of the rules submitted on February 25, 1975, to permit the employment of unsighted persons as VHG marine public coast operators. You are, hereby, granted a waiver of the provision of Section 81.116(a) and 81.314(a) of the rules for one year on condition that unsighted persons be provided and use non-visual means of compliance with these sections as detailed in your request for waiver. At the end of one year, the Commission will expect a complete report of the effectiveness of unsighted persons as VHF marine public coast operators and any problems which may develop. I suggest you keep records accordingly.

I wish you success in this endeavor and, if I can be of further assistance, please advise.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES A. HIGGINBOTHAM  
*Chief, Safety and Special  
Radio Services Bureau*

Federationists will readily agree that Mr. Higginbotham's letter, while containing the

good news that the blind will be permitted to work for Marine Telephone, also contains the usual slap at the dignity of the blind. Furthermore, many employers, faced with the prospect of battling the Federal Government in order to employ the blind, would throw up their hands in disgust. To Marine Telephone's credit, it has not. Many of the blind of Florida will have new jobs—jobs which they have never had before.

Also, something else might be said. Although the Bureau of Blind Services in Florida performed its statutory function of assisting blind persons in placement in jobs, the bureau's efforts to secure these jobs and to fight for the rights of the blind were somewhat less than impressive. Where, for instance, was the bureau from September (the time of FCC's verbal turndown) until April 11 (the date of the probationary approval)? Did the bureau, for example, attempt to remonstrate with the FCC? What about the President's Committee? Did it truly serve as an advocate for the blind? Do we always have to wait seven months or longer for some Federal commission to approve our right to work? And what does this latest incident tell us about the strength of the National Federation of the Blind? Is it any coincidence that only a few days after our involvement (in late February) appropriate papers were filed and wheels began to turn? What would have happened if the Bureau of Blind Services in Florida had contacted our affiliate there to seek its help? I think we know what would have happened, but I doubt if the Bureau does.



LIBRARIES FOR THE BLIND:  
TALKING BOOK MACHINE POLICY AND GENERAL PURPOSE  
BY KENNETH JERNIGAN

Some time this spring I received a call from Sharon Gold, a Federationist who lives in California. Her talking book machine had stopped working and she had asked her regional library to send her another. She told them she would return the defective machine in the meantime. They refused, saying that they would have to receive her machine before they could send her another.

She thought this was unreasonable since she needed the talking book machine in her employment. I agreed with her and suggested that she talk with Mr. Cylke, Chief of the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress. I thought there must have been some mistake and that Mr. Cylke could help with a clarification of policy. She did contact Mr. Cylke and then wrote him the following letter:

*Lancaster, California, April 4, 1975*

MR. F. KURT CYLKE  
*Division for the Blind and  
Physically Handicapped  
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CYLKE: This letter is written in regard to our telephone conversation of March 14, 1975, during which we discussed current library policies concerning books and equipment lent to blind persons through the regional libraries under the auspices of the Library of Congress, Books for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

As I explained to you, I had been denied replacement of the talking book machine,

currently issued to me, which was un-repairable, unless I first returned the machine. The agency explained that a direct exchange would have to be made at the agency, either by hand or by mail. Making the exchange by mail would have resulted in at least a two if not a three week interruption in service. Upon conferring with the director of this agency, I learned that the reason for this policy was that the agency could have no assurance that a person would return the defective equipment if equipment were dispersed prior to receipt of the equipment in need of repair. The director of this agency further stated that a person abusing the borrowing privileges in this manner could not be held responsible.

It was because of the current policy on lending equipment as stated by this agency, and the attitude toward the lack of responsibility held by the borrowers of books and equipment, that I became concerned and telephoned you.

You concurred with the policy, as it had been related to me, stating that the FBI would have to be called in to regain unreturned equipment and that this could not be feasible as the expense of the FBI investigation and prosecution would be too great to recover a forty dollar item such as a talking book machine. Therefore, only one machine could be issued to any one person at any one time, and a direct exchange would be necessary to replace any equipment in need of repair. You did say, however, that you are not aware of any such abuse or hoarding of the issued equip-

ment.

I pointed out to you that many of us rely on the library services, including equipment, to assist us in employment and/or as students. I then understood you to say that library services are set up strictly for pleasure reading and that if I needed the talking book machine for use in employment, I should purchase my own. As I told you, I would like very much to own a talking book machine and would have done so long ago if the exact machine, as issued by the Library of Congress, were available for purchase. I further understood you to say that the talking book machine currently issued is available from the American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Kentucky.

I have contacted the American Printing House and am enclosing a copy of the brochure which I received for your review. Please note that the only models of the talking book machine listed as available by the American Printing House are of the old tube type. I am told that the transistorized talking book machine, as presently distributed by the Library of Congress, is not and has never been available for purchase from the American Printing House. If I have misunderstood the agency to which you referred me, I should very much appreciate the correction.

If the lending agencies are, in fact, to continue with the current policy on equipment repair and replacement, I should like to suggest that borrowers be advised of this through *Talking Book Topics* and the *Braille Book Review*. I should like to further suggest that the purpose of the library services, as you defined them to me on the telephone, be clarified. It is my concern that most of us are not aware that the library services are intended solely for pleasure reading and that equipment

must be in the lending agency's possession prior to issuing replacement. If there are students who are relying in any way on any of the services, books, or equipment, borrowed through the Library of Congress lending agencies and any of these students experienced a breakdown in equipment, a two to three week delay, such as would be the case if return and reissue were handled by mail, could leave a student hopelessly behind in his schoolwork for that term. I, personally, found the library services most helpful and necessary when I was in school as much required literature was available. In those days, talking books were recorded at speeds of 33-1/3 rpm and 16-2/3 rpm, the latter being the most circulated. Had I have experienced such a problem, I could have obtained a phonograph for temporary use at the speed of 16-2/3 rpm, while relatively new to the public, was being marketed on a regular basis. However, I shudder to think of the situation I would be in today, as the speed of 8-1/3 rpm just doesn't exist other than on talking book machines. I could cite many examples of how I currently make use of the library services in my employment, and how students currently rely on these same services. However, space does not permit more elaboration.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for the time you spent discussing this matter with me on the telephone and for your further review of this matter. I am looking forward to the NFB Convention in Chicago and to meeting you.

Sincerely,

SHARON GOLD

cc: Kenneth Jernigan

When I read Miss Gold's letter, I contacted Mr. Cylke. In general he confirmed the accuracy of what Miss Gold had said concerning their conversation, but he said that it was a matter of emphasis, which could make it appear in a different light. When I asked him to explain and told him we might have a *Monitor* article about it, he said he would send me a statement of library policy to clarify the matter.

He did send it, but it seemed so different from what he told me on the telephone and what Miss Gold says he told her that it is hard to call the difference just a matter of emphasis. Perhaps Mr. Cylke did not understand what I asked him, perhaps I did not understand what he told me, perhaps Miss Gold did not understand him, perhaps he did not know what policy was being followed when he talked with us and was simply shooting from the hip, perhaps he changed his mind as well as policy after talking with us, or perhaps it was something else. In any case, the policy statement is reproduced as part of this article.

Mr. Cylke does not address himself to the question of whether the libraries exist only for the purpose of providing pleasure or for additional purposes as well, but it seems fairly clear that he is not advocating that the libraries wait until they get the old machine from the borrower before sending a replacement. It should also be borne in mind that the Library of Congress has no administrative control over the regional libraries and, thus, relatively little leverage concerning their actions. The Library of Congress provides some (but only some) of the books circulated by the regional libraries and it provides no funds for staff or other expense. It can (and often does)

provide useful counsel and suggestions and worthwhile leadership. Since Mr. Cylke's coming, the leadership has been increasingly strong and determined.

After talking with Mr. Cylke, I asked Mrs. Grannis to conduct a survey of those libraries throughout the country which also serve as talking book machine lending agencies. Over three quarters of them said that they send out a talking book machine immediately on being notified that a borrower's machine is broken, relying on the borrower to follow through and promptly return the defective machine. They said that they almost never have problems as a result. Our library here in Iowa follows this policy and it works quite well. We know that students and employed blind persons, as well as the entire cross section of our readers, use the talking book machine on a continuing basis and would be seriously inconvenienced if they were deprived of it for any period of time. To act otherwise seems unnecessarily restrictive. After all, the library exists to give service.

In those few instances where we have difficulty in recovering machines we have not found it necessary to call in the FBI. We call the individual or ask one of our field staff, or someone living in the local community, to go and get the machine. This method seems to work quite well. In those few instances (and I emphasize that they are few indeed) where individuals have repeatedly demonstrated that they cannot keep commitments, we find it necessary to say that we will not send new machines until we receive from them the ones needing repair. Our survey would tend to indicate that most of the other libraries feel as we do about the matter. Unfortunately, however, (and regardless of Mr. Cylke's policy statement) several of the libraries said that they would not send out a machine until they had in hand the defective machine which is being replaced.

Certainly we do not regard the libraries as existing for the sole purpose of providing pleasure, important as this undoubtedly is.

Public libraries exist to meet a variety of needs—education, job related information, research, and virtually anything and everything else relating to intellectual stimulation and mental growth. Of course, they also exist to make life more pleasant and to meet the needs of leisure time. Properly conceived, libraries for the blind are public libraries—but they are more (much more). They are virtually the only source of reading material available to the general blind population. While Recording for the Blind and many other agencies provide textbooks, the libraries should supplement these resources in addition to quite frequently serving as a clearing house and coordinator for them and as a source of information about them. Over and above all this is the question of what constitutes a textbook or a workbook. What one individual may read for study another may read for pure delight, while a third may combine both functions in the same act.

Be this as it may, the emphasis in the libraries must be on filling needs and the underlying philosophy must be that the blind are as competent and creative and inquisitive and eccentric and normal as others. Our survey would indicate that Miss Gold's library does, indeed, require the return of a broken talking book machine before issuing a new one, but, fortunately, it seems to be in the minority.

To insure continued improvement of library services, the blind must be vigilant, active, and well informed. Hopefully, Mr. Cylke will work with us in cooperation and enlightenment.

His policy statement on lending talking book machines follows:

### MACHINE LENDING AGENCY PROCEDURES

It is the goal of the division to assure the most efficient use of equipment resources by utilizing machine lending agencies, many of which are part of the regional library network, and an extensive network of dedicated Telephone Pioneers. This goal has been consistently realized.

For years the division has been able to maintain an adequate supply of equipment for readers. Furthermore, machine agencies have been able to minimize if not totally eliminate the period during which an individual is without service, due to machine malfunction, because of procedures recommended by the division and followed by the machine lending agencies. These procedures include:

1. Personal delivery. Through networks of either volunteers or paid employees, upon receipt of a malfunction report, an agency representative personally brings a replacement machine to a reader and picks up the one in need of repair.
2. Mail exchange. As soon as an individual notifies his agency of machine trouble, a new machine is mailed to him. The patron can use the carton to return the malfunctioning machine to the agency.
3. Often Pioneers are able to handle repairs so rapidly (within a few days) that an individual gets back the same machine that is picked up for repair.

Last year the program realized its first instance of significant machine shortage in many years. This situation came about as a result of the energy crisis, which greatly

extended the manufacturer's lead time. To assure minimum inconvenience to readers during this period, a redistribution of available machines, to maximize use, was undertaken by the division. The equipment control officer requested that each agency submit a monthly report indicating, for both talking-book and cassette machines, the number of machines waiting for assignment, repair or being repaired, and the number of individuals on waiting lists. This served as a base for redistribution of machines from areas with machine availability to those realizing shortages.

Furthermore, on February 22, 1974, a memorandum was sent to all machine agencies, the contents of which not only indicate the number of cassette machines to be received within a short period of time, but also outlines the procedures recommended for their distribution. These

procedures were a further step taken by the division to assure the most equitable, broad-based availability of service.

As was anticipated, the inconvenience caused by the shortage of machines was temporary and at present an adequate supply of machines is available to meet reader demand.

A more recent step taken by the division to assure the most efficient distribution control and repair of equipment has been the preparation and implementation of the "Lending Agency Service Agreement for Sound Reproducurs and Other Reading Equipment." Signed copies have already been received from a majority of the agencies and more are arriving each day. A review of this agreement will show how specific the expectations of the division are with regard to equipment. □

## INSURANCE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE BLIND

BY

TED YOUNG

[Reprinted from the March, 1975 issue of *At Liberty*, publication of the Liberty Alliance of the Blind, Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind chapter.]

On Thursday, February 20, 1975, the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance held hearings on the subject of insurance discrimination. Ted Young, Bernard Seitlin, and Arthur Segal, represented the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind. In addition to the following testimony prepared and presented by Ted Young, our representatives spoke about the difficulty which blind people have in obtaining insurance protection for travel; the need for a law to eliminate discrimination in the area of

insurance coverage for employment; and the hesitancy of some insurance companies to inform a newly blinded person of all his rights under a policy. Here is the formal testimony presented at the hearing:

At the outset, allow us present for the record a package of material obtained from the National Federation of the Blind—the largest national organization of blind consumers, established to promote the economic and social advancement of all the blind. At first glance, this material appears to be innocent and harmless enough. It consists of replies to two questions raised by Daniel Andersen, Actuary, Department of Insurance in Iowa. The



questions are: (1) "What are your underwriting practices for both life and health insurance when dealing with a blind applicant? and (2) If such applicants are either rated or denied coverage, what is your justification for such action?"

One would have hoped that in the field of insurance, logic would have emerged from the mathematics, statistics, and actuaries which are the major tools of the profession. However, here, as elsewhere in our society, misconceptions, value judgments, stereotypes and myths about blindness overrule common sense and logic and force the blind into second-class citizenship. Rather than the carefully-studied approach that one would hope to find from companies with the power to decide whether blind people can leave relatives and loved ones with some security,<sup>4</sup> whether blind people can protect themselves against prolonged loss of earned income due to sickness or accident, and whether blind people can protect themselves against the financial disaster of high hospital and medical expenses, we find a startling and deplorable lack of research and serious thought. Unfortunately, as we shall see in our examination of this material, there is a lack of guidelines and policies, and the blind are subject to individual judgments and opinions. Almost every letter we have examined abounds with that vague word "usually"—the almost magic, semantic justification for the nonuniformity of practice that must surely spring from the subjective decisions of underwriters who have grown up in a society replete with myths and misconceptions about the blind. For purposes of this presentation I will define discrimination as "the denial of opportunity to a person or group based on preconceived stereotypes and ideas about the physical differences of that person or

group." Given this definition, I think that we will leave no doubt that the insurance industry as a whole is guilty of gross discriminatory practices against the blind.

One major discriminatory practice with which the blind are confronted when applying for life or health insurance, is the need to meet special qualifications. Because many in our society believe that the blind are not capable of doing very much of anything, we, the blind, often find ourselves caught in the bind of needing to meet special qualifications or having to excel in order to achieve equal status. Such qualifications as the need to take special tests before entering college, additional qualifications to be eligible for a job or to obtain credit, are not unusual. The insurance industry can count itself in the vanguard of imposing such absurdities upon the blind.

In the areas of life and health insurance, one finds a predominance of such statements as: coverage is standard if the individual is well-adjusted, both physically and emotionally, to his handicap, well-rehabilitated, self-sufficient, employed, and so on. After stating that the *Underwriters' Manual* requires an additional rate of \$2.50 per thousand for life insurance for the blind, the Equitable Life Insurance Company goes on to say, "In actual practice, a standard policy is issued to all persons who appear to have adequately adjusted, both physically and emotionally, to their blindness. The period and degree of adjustment are functions of the person's basic personality, the cause of blindness, the ability to become self-supporting, and a wide variety of other factors. When the underwriting information presented to us demonstrates an adequate and satisfactory adjustment, we do issue a standard policy."

---

Thus we have imposed on the blind the need to meet the company's criteria of an adequate adjustment, based on such immeasurable criteria as personality and emotional stability. And what of the people making such judgments? I know of at least one mother of a blind infant who was told by an insurance agent that the baby would have been better off dead. Surely such vague criteria as cited above can only result in discrimination when left to individual interpretations.

While we are speaking of discriminatory criteria let us look at their final result as set forth in a letter from the Aetna Company. "We do not feel that there is any insurable interest or justification for life insurance on an individual with an impairment such as blindness who would be totally dependent on someone else for his support." What a sweeping indictment against the unemployed blind, the blind housewife and homemaker! Does this company suppose that the services of a blind homemaker are easily or cheaply replaced, or that the funeral expenses for an unemployed blind person are less than those for others in our society? Where can we, the blind, expect to find justice when such lessons in biased and discriminatory opinions are written by a vice-president of a major insurance company?

Another test that the blind are required to meet by all but two companies in the survey, is the test of time. Most companies suggest that it takes from two to five years for an individual to become adjusted to his blindness. These companies will either postpone granting insurance or will charge an extra rate for life insurance if the person has not been blind for the required period of time, or if he does not meet the criteria of adjustment after that time. The

Aetna Company, for example, will not grant insurance in the first year of blindness, grant insurance with an additional premium in the second year of blindness, and grants standard insurance only after the third year. No statistical evidence is adduced in any of the letters from insurance companies to support such practices; yet such practices are widespread.

The blind child under the age of fifteen or sixteen does not fare at all well at the hands of insurance companies. Three companies in the survey indicate that only rarely would they grant life insurance to blind children; three other companies state that they will do so only with an additional premium; and one company will grant standard coverage if the child is congenitally blind. Although the other companies did not specifically mention blind children, the qualification of self-support for standard coverage serves to exclude them. The Continental Assurance Company states, "it has been our experience that these actions are necessary because of the extra hazzard present with young people who are blind because of their natural exuberance, lack of judgment, etc." While it is admittedly difficult to know whether the writer of this letter meant to state that exuberance and lack of judgment are concomitant with youth—the statement is discriminatory since it makes unfounded judgments about the blind. This company, which states that it will not insure blind youth, or at best, will only grant them restricted coverage, points to its own obviously extremely limited experience to justify its beliefs and practices. Nowhere, in any letter from any company, has it been shown that blind children have been proven to be a greater risk.

Where coverage for accidental death

benefits was mentioned in the letters at all, it was to state that such coverage is not available to the blind. The Equitable Life Insurance Society of the United States declares: "The present trend of teaching blind people to be as self-sufficient as possible, to increase their freedom of movement, subjects them, in the opinion of our underwriter and medical departments, to increased risk." Here, we, the blind, find ourselves trapped in the illogical opinions which are so often our lot. To get basic life insurance we need to be self-sufficient and self-supporting, which usually requires traveling about; however, our ability to meet these qualifications militates against our ability to get accidental death benefit coverage. Again, we are confronted by lack of statistics, as not one letter cited evidence that blind people suffer more death-causing accidents. In fact, studies conducted by the Bureau of Workmen's Compensation have shown that the blind suffer proportionately fewer industrial accidents. We believe that a broader study would point out the ridiculous nature of a policy that denies accidental death benefits to blind people.

Waiver of premium for disability is a coverage that is not available to the blind from any of the responding insurance companies. The most common reason is set forth in a quote from Banker's Life: "Waiver on disability is not available because our definition of total disability is such that a blind person is considered totally disabled." To consider blindness as a total disability is to step back into the myths of bygone centuries and to ignore the reality of the present world. Today thousands of blind people are working in an increasing number of occupations, performing tasks which were previously considered by the sighted, and by some blind people,

as impossible. While we do not deny that blindness may be individually devastating to some persons, to deny the possibility of a person's waiving blindness as a condition of disability through a special rider is clearly discriminatory. Such a denial prevents the blind person from obtaining coverage for the many conditions to which he, as well as others in society, is subject.

Until now, I have dealt with life insurance and associated coverage. Regrettably, the treatment of the blind in the field of health insurance is even worse. Indeed, while most blind people can obtain basic life insurance if they are willing to pay extra and give up some basic rights, some forms of health insurance are totally unavailable. For example, most companies do not issue disability-income insurance to blind people, based on the assumption that we are subject to more frequent and prolonged disability. Often when such coverage is offered, it is subject to additional premium charges of from fifty to one hundred percent. Based on the belief that blind people will be out of work longer than sighted persons, some companies offer disability-income insurance for a limited period of time, for example, two years. Aside from the lack of statistical evidence for such practices, such policies totally ignore increased employment opportunities for the blind. Many states are currently passing amendments to insure the blind equal employment opportunities under their human relations acts. The Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires companies receiving more than \$2,500 in contracts from the Federal Government to grant employment opportunities to the handicapped.

Accident and sickness policies are always issued with an extra premium charge, des-



pite the lack of evidence for the need of such a practice. This is, of course, based on that unproven assumption that blind people have more accidents.

Even hospital, medical, and major-medical insurance is subject to an extra premium charge—most often because of the belief expressed by the Prudential Insurance Company that “As in life insurance, adjustment to the emotional effects of blindness is an important underwriting consideration; but, in addition, a blind individual’s physical environment often includes certain aids and protections which are essential to his well-being. Because of these needs, hospitals must provide special care and services for blind persons which are reflected in higher hospital charges at the time of prolonged disability.” Another insurance company states that “On hospital policies we felt that there would be a greater probability that the insured would be hospitalized a little sooner and be kept a little longer, and for that reason we charge an extra premium but place no limitation other than an initial waiting period on the impaired condition.” To both of these

reasonings, based on no statistical evidence, we can only reply, *hogwash*. Most blind people live in perfectly normal environments with any special adaptations being more for convenience than for safety or protection. Further, blind people, being just people, resist entering as often and clamor to get out of them as soon as anyone else.

What we have presented here is the danger of allowing myth and misconception to overrule logic. We believe that the weight of evidence for higher premiums for any condition is on the insurance company wishing to charge them, and that, until such evidence is produced, it is discriminatory to charge additional rates, or to deny disability coverage. In the material we have presented is an amendment to the Massachusetts’ law which forbids certain insurance discriminations against the blind. We intend to look into this law further and the Pennsylvania Federation of the Blind will introduce strong legislation on this subject in our State. We hope for the backing of the Insurance Department at that time. □



Donald Capps, for the South Carolina Aurora Clubs (left) and Senator Hyman Rubin (right) watch as Governor James B. Edwards signs S 106 into law.

## AURORA RECORDS 17TH LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind, Inc., is pleased to be able to report the organization's 17th legislative success in seventeen years. The climax came on Friday, May 9, 1975, when Governor James B. Edwards signed into law bill S 106 which principally provides for an increase in the size of the Board of the Commission for the Blind from five members to seven members. After signing the bill, Governor Edwards presented the pen to Aurora official Donald Capps and stated: "Don, I am pleased to present this pen to you as you worked so hard for the passage of this bill." Governor Edwards also pointed out that the pen has the State seal on it as well as the Governor's name. The pen has been placed in the Aurora showcase at the Aurora Center of the Blind which houses many other significant symbols of Aurora achievements throughout the years. Don thanked Governor Edwards for the pen and assured him that many blind persons throughout South Carolina had worked diligently for the passage of this legislation. The signing ceremony took place in the office of the Governor at the State Capitol. It was a fitting climax to several months of diligent and sacrificial effort by the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind and its devoted membership.

Chief author of the bill was Senator Hyman Rubin, Democrat of Richland County, who introduced the bill in the Senate when the General Assembly convened in January at the request of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind. For the next several months, or until the last days of the Legislature, this bill was vigorously opposed; and without a tremendous effort on the part of the South

Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind and the influence of Senator Rubin, the bill never would have been passed. The legislation was sparked by serious differences between Aurora officials and the Executive Director of the Commission for the Blind which surfaced in late August of 1974. Many of these differences culminated in the unanimous adoption by the Aurora State Board of a resolution on September 22 which was carried in the November 1974 issue of the *Palmetto Auran*.

The recently passed law provides that the commission board shall have seven members with three of the members having to be legally blind. However, there is nothing in the law to prevent more than three of the members of the board from being blind. The seven-member board will be chosen on a geographic basis with each of the six congressional districts being represented and one member-at-large. The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind feels that this is both equitable and workable, although Senator Rubin's bill did not initially provide for geographical representation. It is also felt that the larger board will be far more representative and effective with greater input by the blind. The two newly-created positions on the board will be filled from the First and Fifth Congressional Districts. The board position from the First Congressional District will be for one year and the board position from the Fifth Congressional District will be for three years. The new law is so constituted that all seven members of the commission board will come up for consideration by the Governor during the next three years. In 1976 the term of Mrs. T. E. Barham, who is blind, will expire and the term of the

member from the First Congressional District will also expire. Two years from now, or in 1977, the terms of Mr. W. Eugene Abrams, who is blind, and Mr. Harry J. Haynsworth, who is sighted, will expire. Two of these members are Mr. A. Peter Anselmo and Mr. Samuel Zimmerman, both of whom are sighted. In 1978, the term of the member who is appointed from the Fifth Congressional District will also expire. Thus there could be a number of changes on the Board of the Commission for the Blind during the next three years which, of course, will be determined by the Governor's office and the Senate, which must confirm all appointments. The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind will, of course, be interested in the kind of people who will serve on the Board of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind. The board of the commission is the policy-setting body and is responsible for the kind of leadership afforded the agency.

While the principal provision of the new law is highly important in that it increases the size of the board and the percentage of blind representation, the new law also contains two other minor provisions. In keeping with a trend in state government,

the title of the head of the Commission for the Blind was changed from Executive Director to Commissioner. Also, the new law has somewhat improved the grievance procedure for a blind client by providing for an independent hearing officer rather than having the hearing conducted by the Board of the Commission for the Blind, which was the arrangement under the old law. The new law further provides that a client may seek to remedy his grievance through a higher judicial procedure if the decision of the hearing officer and the commission board is not acceptable.

The South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind feels that this was a highly significant legislative triumph, well deserved through hard work and a painstaking project which was thoroughly researched. Aurora officials are grateful for the patience and understanding of the Legislature which must have been frustrated if not confused from time to time because of the controversy which surrounded the legislation from the outset. It is the fervent hope of Aurora officials that the legislation will prove highly beneficial in the operation of the Commission for the Blind and will better serve the Blind of South Carolina. □

## THE NFB OF FLORIDA: ON THE BARRICADES AGAIN

BY

JAMES GASHIEL

In 1972 the National Federation of the Blind of Florida went to the barricades in an all-out effort to secure justice for Florida's blind vending facility operators who participate in the program administered by the Florida Bureau of Blind Services. Even though some in Florida boast of having an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind and a Randolph-Sheppard

Vendors of America organization which is (as everybody knows) a front for the ACB, the NFB of Florida initiated, paid for, and won a court battle on behalf of all blind vendors in the State. Now, the National Federation of the Blind of Florida is again on the barricades, and winning.

During the present session of the Florida

Legislature, a bill has been introduced which would reorganize and regionalize all of the many services provided by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS). One of the divisions under the present department is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and one of the bureaus under this division is the Bureau of Blind Services. The proposed legislation, which has already passed the Florida Senate, would abolish the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Blind Services. All of the services offered through the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services would be administered directly by a single umbrella agency, having eleven regional directors and hundreds of one-stop service centers throughout the State. Under this plan the blind would be lost, their needs forgotten, and their programs destroyed.

With strong backing from powerful members of the Florida Senate, the HRS reorganization bill had cleared the Senate after the first two days of the session. Quickly it was referred to the appropriate committees in the House of Representatives, and passage looked certain. Feeling that it was about to be swept under in the tide of reorganization, the Bureau of Blind Services called upon the organized blind.

Despite the fact that the Chief of the Bureau of Blind Services has not been particularly supportive of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida or the NFB at the national level, we went to the barricades for the bureau, feeling that a program must be saved. Many members of the NFB of Florida participated in the campaign, and a truly impressive delegation went to the Capitol in Tallahassee to talk personally with legislators and to be present during committee consideration of the re-

organizing bill. So keen was NFB's interest in this fight to save Florida's services for the blind that Dr. Jernigan sent the Chief of the Washington Office to lend a hand.

On Tuesday, April 22, a crucial vote came in the House Appropriations Committee. An amendment to the HRS reorganization bill was proposed which had the effect of exempting the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Blind Services from reorganization by transferring them, intact, to the Department of Education. NFB of Florida's president, Beth Bowen, set forth the NFB's position in a policy statement dated April 21, 1975:

The National Federation of the Blind of Florida is a consumer organization, affiliated nationally, having members throughout the State of Florida. Most of us are clients or former clients of the Bureau of Blind Services. We are impressed with the progress made by the Bureau of Blind Services during the past year, and we hope that you will help us preserve and protect this agency so that worthwhile programs can continue to reach us. It must be emphasized that our interests are those of clients—the people served. While our jobs are not at stake, the vital services we receive may be.

The Legislature is presently considering a bill (HR 773) which will reorganize the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. In our judgment, wholesale reorganization and regionalization will severely impair effective and efficient services to the blind. We urge that you support an amendment to this bill. While some reorganization of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services might be appropriate, it is our hope that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau



of Blind Services can remain intact and be placed, administratively, in the Department of Education. We urge that you adopt this amendment for the following reasons:

(1) Logically, vocational rehabilitation is primarily an educational pursuit, having as its emphasis training and retraining activities. As many states have found, vocational rehabilitation is not well served when it functions under the umbrella of Health and Welfare. In fact, the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration was recently moved by an act of Congress from its former location within Federal social services and welfare programs. Nineteen states have elected to administer vocational rehabilitation programs and services to the blind under their department of education or vocational education. To illustrate the intimate relationship which necessarily exists between the functions of rehabilitation and those of education, during Fiscal Year 1974, the Bureau of Blind Services spent \$3,606,000 on education-related services—rehabilitation and training center, industrial laboratory, cooperative school programs, training and job placement, talking book library, and home teaching. This expenditure for education-related services was out of the bureau's total budget of \$4,734,334. The budget figures for the Bureau of Blind Services clearly demonstrates that services which are essentially educational in nature constitute a substantial portion of the functions performed by this rehabilitation agency. Thus, it would make sense, from an organizational viewpoint, to place the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Blind Services in the Department of Education.

(2) By transferring the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Blind Services to the Division of Education,

the important identity of these service programs will be maintained. The argument of those supporting this legislation is that regionalization will improve services by bringing them closer to the people. On the contrary, we are convinced that this ultimate step of fragmentation will inevitably result in wasted resources through endless red tape, extensive duplication, and massive confusion. The idea that all human services can effectively be provided through one local office responsible for meeting the needs of all is simply unworkable. Inevitably, the individual needs which a particular group of people (such as the blind) have in common will be forgotten in an effort to deal with the masses. The predictable results will be less relevant services for all, less rehabilitation for those who could be trained, and more tax dollars spent in the form of welfare payments to those who might otherwise have been reached through a properly administered rehabilitation program.

(3) In our judgment, accountability and responsiveness of rehabilitation programs and officials who administer them would be best served by retaining an identifiable agency placed within the Division of Education. Under the regional plan, the autonomous regional directors and their staffs of generalists would not only lack the specific knowledge to respond to client needs, but they would also be reporting to other officials possessing limited expertise in rehabilitation. Under the new plan, we predict that the responsible members and committees of the Florida Legislature would encounter an almost endless series of bureaucratic maneuvers and "buck passing" when they attempted to exercise the necessary functions of legislative oversight.

To summarize, experience throughout

the country has taught us that fragmented services to the disabled and blind mean more bureaucracy and less real help. Officials who administer rehabilitation programs for the blind must be both knowledgeable and responsive. This can best be done through an identifiable single agency. In this plan for State reorganization and regionalization what begins as "trash burning" must not be permitted to become arson. Applying this principle we urge the Legislature not to swap workable programs for an experiment of doubtful value. The lives of thousands of blind Floridians are at stake.

---

This statement was distributed to all of the members of the House Appropriations Committee, and the arguments contained in it were used extensively during the debate. When the vote on the amendment was finally called, an impressive number of Federationists were visibly present to witness it. Their efforts were rewarded—the "ayes" won. The amendment passed, the Chairman adjourned the meeting.

An important lesson emerges from this

latest victory of the NFB. Although there are those who will say that "all of the major organizations both of and for the blind" rallied to the cause, the NFB of Florida successfully turned the tide and saved the bureau. We were the front line troops on the barricades. This effort was strengthened with the help of the National Office of the NFB. In 1969, the State of Florida had a completely separate State Commission for the Blind, but in that year, the Florida commission was swept up in another reorganizing trend and submerged in the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, as part of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In those days, there was no NFB affiliate in Florida. The ACB was there, in the shadows, as usual. One wonders, "what were they doing?"

As this article goes to press, the final word is not in on the effort to save Florida's programs for the blind. The NFB of Florida is still on the barricades and we will be there until the battle is over. The tide has been turned, and the first victory has been won. The blind of Florida will fight, and they will continue to have national support, and we wonder if the Bureau of Blind Services will remember.

□

## BLIND GIRL'S MOTHER WANTS TO LEAVE TOWN

BY

JIM IRVINE

[Reprinted by courtesy of the Lebanon (Oregon) Express.]

*Editor's Note.—The following account indicates how much the NFB has yet to do about education of the blind, education of the sighted, about attitudes of children and adults, and about the problems of the blind when adjustment has been less than ideal. Lebanon, Oregon is a town of something under 10,000 people. The*

*School for the Blind, however, is located in Salem, the State's Capital, which has a population of about 70,000.*

Joyce Bailey doesn't like Lebanon, and never has. And the torment her daughter is undergoing is not changing her attitude about us.

Why doesn't she leave? "I've been thinking about it," she replies. "But I want to stick it out for a while—for Pam's sake. I think we would be happier in a bigger town."

Pam is her daughter and a sophomore at Lebanon Union High School. Though a sophomore, this is her first year in a public school. For twelve years prior to this fall, Pam attended the blind school in Salem. She is partially, and legally, blind. "But the people at the blind school thought she should attend a public school, so we are giving it a try," says Mrs. Bailey. "But it is a frustrating experience—both for me and for Pam."

Pam was adopted by the Baileys when she was six months old. They came to Lebanon in 1966 where Bailey was a plywood supervisor for American Plywood Association until his death from a heart attack in November, 1973. Since then, Mrs. Bailey has been alone raising Pam. Another daughter is married and living in Salem and a son lives in California.

The first part of this school year was "so-so" for Pam. With the aid of special books with large letters and special pencils with wide lines, she has managed to get through the first five months. Friends and neighbors drove her to school and her mother picked her up.

Then Soda came into her life. Soda is a golden retriever guide dog provided for Pam by Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael, California, after an intensive four-week training course. "We went to California last summer to visit my son John who lives near the guide dog school," says Mrs. Bailey. "He was impressed with the program and took Pam and me to the school.

I, too, was impressed, but I wasn't sure whether she should have a dog. And, I wasn't sure Lebanon was ready for a guide dog." After a series of interviews with the guide dog people, Pam was accepted for training and graduated February 1.

Since returning to her classes with Soda, however, Pam has undergone a series of ridiculing episodes. A padlock on her school locker was ripped off twice and her locker searched. Mrs. Bailey has received "two or three" telephone calls from anxious parents concerned that Soda is vicious and might bite their children. (She's not and she won't, unless Pam is threatened.) And recently, Mrs. Bailey said she saw three boys throwing rocks at Pam and her dog as they were walking home from school.

"But Pam is really not the one who is to be pitied or felt sorry for," says her mother. "It is these people (whatever they are—I feel they can't even be called humans, much less boys or girls)—if they derive pleasure in making fun of her and her dog. I would like to ask a question. Where were these children's parents when they were still tiny tots; perhaps at some all-important meeting or card game? Things such as blindness, deafness, or mental retardation have to be explained and shown to the children when they are small. I will have to add that the staff at the high school has been very good and kind to Pam," continues Mrs. Bailey. "Also, some of the merchants, but that is really not enough. It takes a whole community of understanding, and that includes young and old alike."

Mrs. Bailey says she feels fortunate that her late husband and she were able to adopt Pam. "She has given the whole family a wonderful insight into the world of the



handicapped. You would never have seen my children or grandchildren making fun of any type of handicapped person, so as you can tell, I blame this on the parents as much as the children."

But Pam is changing, says her mother. Her experiences in Lebanon have burned her. "She used to be so happy-go-lucky," says her mother. "Now she is bitter. She doesn't complain—she just doesn't talk much, but I know. It's affecting her grades, too." And, according to Mrs. Bailey, it isn't only Pam who suffers. For two and a half years she worked at the Willamette Valley Rehabilitation Center and became acquainted with many people there. "This town is just not ready to accept handicapped people," she adds. "I have always

believed the sign ('The Town That Friendliness Built') was perhaps the biggest farce ever."

Meanwhile, she says, she will stay here at least until the end of the school year. Many neighbors, friends, and acquaintances have helped her with her daughter's adjustments, like driving her to school every morning. "I know if my husband were alive, he would put her in a private school. But I don't know. Just don't feel sorry for Pam. She understands, even if it does hurt. It will someday make her a better citizen for it; but do have compassion for those so uneducated and uninformed people who right now are making her life a little less pleasant than it could be. They are the ones who will be hurt in the end—not Pamela." □

#### ARIZONA CONVENTION

BY

JAMES CARLOCK

Yuma saw some extra blind people on the weekend of April 25 - 27, 1975. Among them was James Gashel, Chief of our Washington office, representing the National Federation of the Blind. In all, about forty-one were in attendance from Flagstaff, Yuma, Tucson, and Phoenix. The eventful weekend began on Friday evening with a dinner dance hosted by the NFB of Arizona. We would here mention that Mr. Gashel appeared on local television on the evening news which was a means of publicizing not only the convention but the work of the NFB.

The convention opened Saturday morning with the scheduled open meeting of the NFB of Arizona Board of Directors.

The theme of this convention was organ-

izing and strengthening local chapters and the group organizing a chapter in Yuma under the guidance of Mrs. Aileen Tenny was given a warm welcome.

During the afternoon session, Mr. Charles Thomas of the Lions Yuma Eye Center, explained the original concept, the development of ideas, and the center's current situation. We then heard from Ms. Shanon Mahnon, an employee of the State Department of Economic Security. We discussed Adult Social Services which will soon be established in Arizona, among other topics. Ms. Mahnon indicated that much has yet to be determined about the proposed services. We also learned how to start a credit union and the discussion certainly left us with different ideas about credit unions.

Also during the afternoon session we held election for officers and directors. The results were as follows: President, James Carlock of Phoenix; Vice-President, Houston Robertson of Phoenix; Second Vice-President, Walter Cone of Tucson, Secretary, Cathy Guncheon; Treasurer, John Tsosie, Tucson; Directors: Ms. Aileen Tenny of Yuma and Ms. Adonis Johnson of Flagstaff.

Among the honored guests at the Saturday night banquet were State Senator Jones Osborn of Yuma, Miss Shanon Mahnon of the Department of Economic Security, James Gashel, NFB representative and his mother, who was in Yuma visiting relatives. Mr. Gashel delivered an excellent banquet address which spoke of the purpose of the National Federation of the Blind. Mr. Pete DeVault, a Home Teacher in the Department of Rehabilitation, presented the annual report of the agency along with a letter from its director, Mr. Frank Kells, explaining the action which combines Arizona Industries for the Blind with SRBVI. Senator Jones Osborn installed our officers.

Following the Sunday morning devotional service, we heard an explanation of the background and a summary of the recent Randolph-Sheppard amendments and a discussion of how they affect the program. A presentation was made by Mr. Herman Cordasco who is a Federationist currently employed by SRBVI as a rehabilitation counselor.

Resolutions followed a short discussion centered on chapter activities. Among the resolutions adopted was one which expressed our steadfast opposition to any encouragement by the State Rehabilitation Bureau to any private agency that accreditation be procured from NAC before the bureau would purchase services from such private agency. It was the consensus of the convention that to make the policy of affirmative action meaningful, the agency be urged to fill any possible positions with qualified blind persons. A letter to that effect is to be sent to the proper officials.

Delegates to the NFB Convention in Chicago are James Carlock and Houston Robertson, and Walter Cone. □

## FLORIDA CONVENTION

BY  
HAROLD SNIDER

The 1975 convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Florida was held at the Roadway Inn, Tallahassee, May 16-18. Judy Welch, NFB of Florida Secretary and this year's convention chairperson, put together the best convention in the history of the NFB of Florida. Federationists from all over the State were greeted at a reception on Friday evening which was hosted by all chapters.

State President Elizabeth Bowen convened the first session at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday. Mayor Johnny Jones welcomed delegates to Tallahassee. James Gashel, Chief of the NFB Washington Office, spoke to the convention about latest developments in Federal legislation, particularly the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill. He also discussed NAC and its loss of Federal grants, and we learned that several

major agencies are dropping NAC accreditation.

Mr. Douglas Smith of the Florida Bureau of Blind Services talked about new developments in medical and social services which are provided by the State agency. Mr. Stephen Prine, Assistant Librarian at the Regional Library in Daytona, answered questions about new materials, arbitrary book selection, and future library services. The morning session was concluded with a very interesting presentation by Don Pride, Executive Director, Florida State Bicentennial Commission. He discussed the growing interest in the Bicentennial and the involvement by the NFB of Florida in its celebration.

A resolution was adopted proposing that the NFB of Florida compile a directory of organizations, services, facilities, and individuals which help or represent blind persons in Florida as its Statewide Bicentennial project. The Bicentennial Commission will pay fifty per cent of the cost of the directory.

After lunch, the convention reconvened to hear Harold Snider's report on the State School for the Deaf and Blind. He stated that the school is primarily serving children with additional handicaps, including blindness, children from rural areas having no programs for special education in public schools, and children from broken and socially deprived homes. It was felt that school's officials were not being open and honest with parents of blind children about the changes in clientele and the fact that the school is not accredited by the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges. A resolution was adopted which urged greater truthfulness by the school as the role of the school changes.

E. C. Crawford, Director of the Vending Stand Program, talked to the convention about new Federal legislation and how it affects stand operators. Several delegates felt that the Bureau of Blind Services was not complying with the Randolph-Sheppard Act and its amendments because of its arbitrary decisions concerning stand operators' representation; questionable "set aside" procedures; and the retirement program, which left operators as neither State employees nor self-employed persons. Operators currently have 20.7 percent of their net earnings withheld for social security and State retirement.

The convention then heard a panel discussion on prejudicial practices in writing insurance and how they can be controlled. Taking part were State Representative Eric Smith; Mr. Tom Jones, an insurance broker; and a representative of the State Insurance Commission. The discussion established that discrimination against blind persons in the writing of disability insurance, double indemnity, and waiver of premium benefits was widespread in Florida, and that there were no actuarial figures to support the current practices. A resolution was adopted which urged support for pending legislation which would eliminate discrimination in the sale of life insurance solely on grounds of blindness.

The fifth annual banquet of the NFB of Florida took place on Saturday evening. Mr. Gashel gave us another rousing speech which showed just how demeaning the silly attitudes of professionals in the field of blindness can become. The "tragi-comedy" of his examples show us that our struggle as Federationists must continue unabated. President Elizabeth Bowen presented the NFB of Florida scholarship award to the outstanding blind high school

senior in Florida. For the first time, the NFB of Florida decided to honor one of its members with a Distinguished Service Award. Its first recipient was Mr. Frederick Booth Uzzle, editor of the *Florida Mini-Monitor* and head of the Jacksonville chapter's tape library.

The final session of the convention was convened at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 18. The convention adopted the minutes of the 1974 convention, the treasurer's report, and other committee reports. Mr. Glen Trosper, Jacksonville was elected treasurer to replace Judge Louis Corbin, who resigned the office because of the pressure of his work. The resignation from the board of Mr. James Parkman was also accepted with regret.

Newly-elected members of the board are Mr. Harold Snider, Mr. James Bowen, and Judge Louis Corbin. Snider and Bowen were elected for two-year terms and Judge Corbin was elected to fill the one-year

term of Mr. Parkman. Elizabeth Bowen was elected National Convention delegate, with Harold Snider and Barbara Nabutovsky as alternates. Next year's NFB of Florida State convention will be held in Jacksonville in mid-February, 1976.

Donald Wedewer, Chief of the Florida Bureau of Blind Services, then spoke to the convention. He congratulated the NFB of Florida on its efforts to keep the BBS as an identifiable State agency and out of becoming a part of the reorganization of the State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Wedewer deplored an agency conflict which delayed the provision of artificial eyes to school children for over a year. He agreed to help the Federation by urging NAC to reconsider the adoption of its own ad hoc committee report on consumer representation, and by reconsideration of his agency's NAC accreditation.

□

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Submitted by  
BARBARA FRAZIER

*Editor's Note.—Barbara Frazier is Vice-President of the Queen City League chapter of the NFB of Ohio.*

## SPICY SPANISH RICE

## Ingredients:

1 pound hamburger  
1 tablespoon fat  
1/3 cup sliced or minced onion  
1/4 cup diced green pepper  
2 tablespoons salt  
2 teaspoons brown sugar  
1 teaspoon chili powder  
1/4 to 1/2 cup bay leaves  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 cup rice  
2½ cups tomatoes  
1/2 cup catsup

## Method:

Brown beef in fat and add onion, green pepper, salt, brown sugar, chili powder, bay leaves, and Worcestershire sauce. Cook until onion is tender but not brown. Add tomatoes and catsup, simmer fifteen minutes.

Add rice and simmer for thirty minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add extra water or tomato if needed.

Yield: Six to eight servings.

□

## MONITOR MINIATURES

Our NFB Disability Insurance for the Blind bill is on its way! Rep. James Burke, chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security of the House Committee on Ways and Means, introduced H. R. 281, a bill which would greatly liberalize disability insurance payments of the Social Security Act for blind persons as follows: (1) would entitle individuals who are legally blind to disability insurance cash benefits if they have six quarters in covered employment and without regard to their ability to engage in substantial gainful employment. A quarter of coverage for Social Security purposes means earnings of \$50 in a three-month calendar quarter. (2) Eliminates the requirement for mandatory referral of blind disability insurance beneficiaries for vocational rehabilitation. (3) Authorizes the payment of disability insurance irrespective of the earnings of the blind individual. Senator Vance Hartke introduced an identical bill, S. 1183. In other words, these measures would remove disability insurance payments from the old "means test" concept to one of true insurance against blindness.

\* \* \* \* \*

The 1975 edition of the "Index of Blind Mail-Order Business Persons" is now available to the visually handicapped in the medium of their choice. Containing entries in twenty-four categories, this index offers basic data on blind-run businesses willing to sell by mail-order to their fellow blind. The publication was prepared as a service of the Cleveland Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. For details write to Warren Sladky, Cleveland Public Library, 325 Superior Avenue, NE,

Cleveland, Ohio 44114.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Kentucky Federation of the Blind will hold its annual convention Friday, September 5, through Sunday, September 7, at the Ramada Inn in Florence, Kentucky. This particular Ramada Inn is close to the Greater Cincinnati Airport, (already familiar to many Federationists) and is also right off I-75 on US 42 at the Florence exit. Our Northern Kentucky Chapter is host of the meeting and would welcome a large representation of Federationists from other states.

\* \* \* \* \*

Old Time Radio Shows on cassette are again being sold by the NFB of Illinois. Price is \$3.50 for C-60 cassette with box. For a new, complete catalog write to: Allen Schaefer, President, NFB of Illinois, Box 141, Mazon, Illinois 60444.

\* \* \* \* \*

The National Federation of the Blind of Illinois is proud to announce the formation of the Prairie State Chapter for residents of Kankakee, Grundy, and Will counties. The following officers were elected at the organizational meeting held in April: President, Carl Miller, Bourbonnais; Vice-President, Professor Bill Isaac, Bourbonnais; Secretary, Mrs. Charlotte Miller, Bourbonnais; Treasurer, Mrs. Ruth Anne Schaefer, Mazon; board members—Don Gillmore, Kankakee; Charlene Scanavino, Gardner; and Russell Fulton, Kankakee.

\* \* \* \* \*



Needed — New York Point Slate and Board. An elderly lady residing in a small Iowa town is in need of a New York Point slate and board. Without these she finds it difficult to maintain contact with a friend some distance away who, like her, knows only New York Point. It would be appreciated if anyone having such a slate and board they would like to donate would contact Mrs. Florence Grannis, Librarian, Iowa Commission for the Blind, Fourth and Keosauqua Way, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

\* \* \* \* \*

On December 15, 1974 the Vendors Chapter of the NFB of Maryland was organized. The officers are: Willie Thompson, President; Don Glover, Vice-President; Orlo Nichols, Secretary; Clara Leatherbury, Treasurer, Bobby Bobo and John McCraw, board members.

On May 10, 1975, the Greater Hagerstown Chapter of the NFB of Maryland was organized. The officers are: Georgia Norford, President, Edna Buehlig, Vice-President, Betty Bussard, Secretary; Cinda Mattingly, Treasurer.

The NFB of Maryland continues to grow. Congratulations to all those active Maryland Federationists.

\* \* \* \* \*

Steve Benson was reelected as president at the April meeting of the Chicago Chapter, NFB of Illinois. Other officers are Mary Hartle, Vice-President; Rami Rabby, Secretary; Dennis Majia, Treasurer, Harold Bradley, board of directors. The other directors, who are holdovers, are Dave Carrol and Sue Lopez.

The New Jersey Council of the Blind announces that its State convention will be held at the Empress Hotel in Asbury Park, on October 25 and 26. The theme this year will be Legislation and the Blind. Those wishing further information should contact Gregory Adams, 11 Holly Street, Somerset, N.J. 08805.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the newest members of USPA (U. S. Parachute Association) is Harry Charlesworth, 24, who made his first jump just a few months ago. It was all pretty routine. He had a good sail, beautiful canopy control and a parachute landing fall within twenty feet of the target. What made Harry Charlesworth's initial jump exceptional is that the moving parachutist has been blind from birth. Thanks to USPA instructor, Bernie Sayers, the challenge of how to teach a fellow who has never seen a parachute or an airplane was met. Charlesworth's "eyes" would be a jumpmaster on the ground with a two-way radio. After ground school, three or four dry runs, Charlesworth was ready and his first jump was better than average, the only thing that was different was when Harry was walking back to the packing area carrying his chute like a trophy all the spectators were giving him a spontaneous ovation.

\* \* \* \* \*

From *The Month's News*, official publication of the NFB of Illinois, we find the following: "Oh! How sweet is the taste of victory! How rewarding is the membership in the National Federation of the Blind! The month of April, 1975 will be long remembered as a landmark in NFB history. On Thursday, April 10, eight

NFBI members traveled to Springfield to testify before the House Executive Committee in support of House Bill 717 which would create an advisory commission, largely composed of blind consumers and consumer representatives, to advise the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services on the Department's programs and services for the blind. A more wholesome, more socially intelligent bill one could not hope for! At least, that is what the House Executive Committee thought, and that is what informed blind people, throughout the State of Illinois, thought! And yet, when the time came for opposing testimony to be given, who should come up to the witness stand but the trio of: (1) Larry Rou, representing the Department of Children and Family Services, who attacked HB 717's emphasis on the advisory role of blind consumers by touting the superior credentials of rehabilitation professionals in work with the blind, and their expertise as "people who know," as contrasted presumably, with blind consumers, who do not know! (2) Lee Iverson, whose ignominious exit from Iowa in the early 60's obviously still colors his vision of the National Federation of the Blind, and who attempted to dupe our lawmakers into thinking that the Illinois Comprehensive Committee on Services to the Blind (which is almost entirely composed of agency representatives) was already doing what the advisory commission proposed in HB 717 would do; and (3) Harold Carter, representing the Illinois Federation of the Blind, who was cozily sandwiched, as expected, between the other two agency spokesmen, and who was so tied to their apron strings as to be strangled by them. The House Executive Committee listened to both sets of testimony, understood the significance of the situation at hand, and, by an over-

whelming majority reported HB 717 out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation.

"Two weeks later, on Thursday, April 24, no less than nineteen NFBI members traveled to Springfield in order to testify in support of House Bills 2919 and 2920 which would create the "Illinois Commission for the Blind," thus consolidating and coordinating all programs and services for the blind in the State, which are now scattered throughout a host of different departments and agencies of State government. Once again, we appeared before the House Executive Committee, and, once again, the exponents of the status quo in work with the blind in Illinois were arrayed against us. To our utter amazement and pleasant surprise not only did the House Executive Committee overwhelmingly vote the two bills out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation, but Chairman John S. Motijevich, in a brilliant display of discriminating wisdom and insight, described the Illinois Federation of the Blind as "clearly too close to the structure" for its own good. Those of us who know how difficult it has been, over the years, to bring our legislators to recognize the difference between NFBI, on the one hand, and the agencies with their company union, on the other, can only regard Representative Motijevich's words as a magnificent victory and a sign of things to come. As of this writing, HB 717 is at third reading in the House while House Bills 2919 and 2920 have been assigned to the House Appropriations Committee. One can only wonder how much longer our unexpected luck will last, in this General Assembly!" Luck, nothing, dear colleagues of the NFBI—rather, long years of dedicated work on your part and the *Monitor* salutes you!

\* \* \* \* \*



A big bouquet of orchids goes to Dick Edlund who recently received the Service to Man Award from the Sertoma Club of Kansas City, Kansas. This award recognizes Dick's efforts to make life a little better for his fellow man. He was recognized not only for his efforts with the NFB, but also in the area of legislation, labor, and his general concern. Richard Edlund is Treasurer of the NFB and if any of you wish to make a contribution and thus make life a little better for our organization, Dick's address is P.O. Box 11185, Kansas City, Kansas 66111.

\* \* \* \* \*

John Knall, president of the Cleveland, Ohio Chapter of the NFB writes that Albert Zupancic, a long-time Federationist, died suddenly in April. He was chairman of two important committees of the Cleveland chapter. "There are very few 'Al Zupensics' among us and he will be hard to replace."

\* \* \* \* \*

Kenneth Hopkins has moved from Idaho to Washington State. For seven years he worked to build the Idaho Commission for the Blind from its roots to its present status as a successful, growing, service-oriented institution. In Idaho he was the first director of a newly organized program; in Washington he must work with what he inherits—not always an easy row to hoe. In Washington, as in Idaho, he will be in charge of services to the blind. But Washington has no commission tying programs together. Since Ken Hopkins is a man of imagination and energy, the program will certainly grow under his administration. As Federationists know, Ken Hopkins has served several terms as NFB

Executive Committeeman. Our best wishes for success go with him.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Editor of the Braille Monitor spent most of his working life as a social work executive, so it is with a bit of a twinge of conscience that he prints the following by Jules Feiffer:

I used to think I was **poor**.

Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was **needy**.

Then they told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy, I was **deprived**.

Then they told me deprived was a bad image, I was **underprivileged**.

They they told me underprivileged was overused, I was **disadvantaged**.

I still don't have a dime, but I have a **great** vocabulary.

□





